

Will the Lost and Saved Stand in the Same Judgment?



by Pastor Lee Roberson, D.D. (1909-2007)

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of CHRIST. For it is written, As I live, saith the LORD, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to GOD. So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to GOD." — ROMANS 14:10-12

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." — 1 CORINTHIANS 3:11-15

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of CHRIST; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." — II CORINTHIANS 5:10

This is the second in our series of messages on the second coming of Christ. Let us remind ourselves of the great place that this teaching has in the Word of God. In the New Testament one verse in twenty refers to His second coming. Practically every book of the sixty-six which make up our Bible has reference to the appearing of the Lord.

For those who are saved, this is not only a doctrine to study, but it is a truth to rejoice every heart. His coming is the blessed hope for God's children. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

Someone has pointed out that all five chapters of 1 Thessalonians end with the Lord's coming for us.

"And to wait for his SON from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." — 1 Thessalonians 1:10

"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." — 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20

"To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before GOD, even our FATHER, at the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST 'with all' His saints." — 1 Thessalonians 3:13

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air: and so shall we ever be with the LORD." — 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

And in the last paragraph of chapter 5, verse 23, we read:

"And the very GOD of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray GOD your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

And so we are to look for the coming of Jesus. This is the blessed hope set before us.

In the message we are discussing the matter of judgments. Much preaching has been done on the subject of "*The Judgment*." Most of it has been with the idea of a general judgment, when all the saved and all the lost stand before God. There is no such judgment in the Scriptures. Instead of one judgment, there are many judgments. Allow me to point out some of them.

1. ***The Judgment of the believer's sins on the cross of CHRIST.*** When Christ bore our sins in His own body on the cross, the result was death for Christ and justification for the believer. We are now free from condemnation and can never again be put in jeopardy. We have passed from death unto life through Christ Jesus.

2. ***The judgment of self.*** "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Corinthians 11:31). Self-judgment avoids chastisement. If we do not judge ourselves, then the result will be the chastening rod of God. Do not confuse the chastening rod with condemnation, for remember, we are free from condemnation through Christ.

3. ***The judgment seat of CHRIST.*** I have just read you three portions of Scripture regarding the judgment seat of Christ and will emphasize this judgment in a few moments.

4. ***The judgment of living nations.*** This judgment takes place at the revelation of Christ, when He shall sit upon the throne of His glory. "And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:32).

The test in this judgment is the treatment accorded by the nations to those whom Christ here calls "my brethren." These brethren are the Jewish remnant who will have preached the Gospel of the kingdom to all nations during the Tribulation. This is the judgment which is frequently called the "general judgment." But if you will notice, there is no mention of a resurrection and the persons judged are the nations of the earth. Also there is nothing said of any books being opened.

5. ***The great white throne judgment.*** This is given to us in Revelation 20:11-15. The lost dead, small and great, are to be brought before God and the books will be opened, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15).

Now I want us to study for a moment the third judgment I mentioned, the judgment seat of Christ.

I. WHEN DOES IT TAKE PLACE?

This judgment of believers' works will take place at the return of Christ for His saints.

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." -- Revelation 22:12

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." -- 2nd Timothy 4:8.

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of GOD." -- 1 Corinthians 4:5

From these verses we can see that this judgment will take place when Christ returns for His own.

II. WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE?

This judgment will take place in the air, when we are caught up to be with the Lord.

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." -- 1st Thessalonians 4:16, 17.

III. WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT OF THIS JUDGMENT?

When we stand before Christ at the judgment seat, we will be there in our resurrection or translated bodies. We will stand before Him as those who have been redeemed by His precious blood. We will stand there to be judged, not for our salvation, but for our works.

This judgment has only to do with Christians. There will be no unsaved people at this judgment. The saved and the lost do not stand together in the same judgment. Our salvation was settled by our acceptance of Jesus, but now we are to be judged for our works and service. Paul tells us that every one of us shall give an account of himself to God. No Christian will escape; therefore, the apostle reminds us that we are not to waste our time judging our brethren, for the time of their judgment is coming when they must stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Second, our works will be tested by fire. In 1st Corinthians 3, Paul says, "If any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

From these words we can notice that our works will be judged, not on the basis of quantity, but on the basis of quality. It is not a matter of how much, but of how.

God does not mean that one person should have the advantage over another. Therefore in the judgment seat we will be judged alike; because of judgment by quality the one-

talent person can receive a reward equal to that of the ten-talent person.

Third, some will receive a reward. If a man's work abide, then he is rewarded by the LORD.

Fourth, some will suffer loss. "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." You will remember that we said only saved people stand at this judgment; therefore, we cannot lose our souls, for we are standing there in resurrection and translated bodies. We will not lose Heaven at the judgment seat, but we can lose our reward.

It is for you to decide whether your works are of gold, silver, or precious stones, or wood, hay, and stubble. The testing time is coming; therefore, we need to do some checking up now.

There are four characteristics which, if found in our works, will make them to abide.

No work will abide which is not done in love. God is love. Christ so loved us that He gave Himself for us. It is foolish to expect any work to abide which is not performed in love.

A work to abide must be done unselfishly. If we work for a reward here, and receive it, then there is no reward hereafter. Hypocrites who pray and are seen of men have their reward. Those who sound a trumpet when they give their money and are seen of men have their reward. We are to labor unselfishly if our works are to abide.

We must labor willingly if our works are to abide. Paul said:

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me." -- 1 Corinthians 9:16, 17

The fourth characteristic of abiding work must certainly be faithfulness. Much is said in the Bible about being faithful. We cannot imagine our Christ overlooking faithfulness in any of His followers.

Yes, we must stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Will you be happy, proud, and rejoicing as you look into the face of the Saviour, or will you bow your head in shame?

When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ,
And He shows me His plan for me;
The plan of my life as it might have been,
Had He had His way and I see --

How I blocked Him here and I checked Him there;
And I would not yield my will --
Will there be grief in my Saviour's eyes --
Grief, though He loves me still?

He would have me rich, and I stand there poor,
Stripped of all but His grace,
While memory runs like a hunted thing,
Down the paths I cannot retrace.

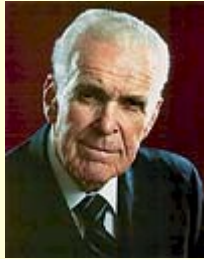
When my desolate heart will well nigh break,
With tears that I cannot shed;

I shall cover my face with my empty hands,
I shall there bow my uncrowned head.

Lord, of the years that are left to me,
I give them to Thy hand,
Take me and break me, mold me to
The pattern -- Thou hast planned.

SOURCE: Chapter 2 from the excellent book, *Some Golden Daybreak*, by Dr. Lee Roberson, D.D.
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